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METHODS OF HEALTH INSTRUCTION IN THE SEVENTH GRADE¹

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The curriculum of the lower grades carries the pupils in the modern school far enough so that there is no justification for much of the material which is commonly used in the upper grades. How widespread this waste of time has been is definitely pointed out in an investigation made by the writer, the results of which were published in the *Elementary School Journal*.²

With the awakening to the fact that the upper grades are open to the charge that they repeat in barren reviews subject-matter well known to the pupils, the public has demanded progress and not the mere marking of time. This in turn has brought about a reorganization of the courses of study in the upper grades and with it a demand for more mature material and material which has practical value. How this demand can be satisfied to some extent is shown in the following quotation:

Through community civics, studies in science and industry, studies in community life, the study of community health problems, studies of home needs, domestic science, manual training, drawing, music, thrift training, manners and conduct, plays and games, as well as through a reorganization and redirection of the work in the older subjects—arithmetic, geography, language study, literature, history—the modern school aims to train pupils for greater social usefulness, to give them a more intelligent grasp of the social and industrial, as well as the moral and civic structure of our modern democratic life.³

¹ This is the fifth of a series of articles on classroom methods for increasing the efficiency of health instruction in the public schools contributed by the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund. Reprints of these articles may be obtained from the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund, 848 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Illinois.

² Carolyn Hoefer, "Reviews in the Seventh and Eighth Grades," *Elementary School Journal*, XIX (March, 1919), 545-53.

³ Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*, p. 369. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919.

A study of the physiological and psychological characteristics of children at the age at which they are usually found in the seventh grade and a survey of the material which is ordinarily taught in this grade are necessary to determine the method and aim of health education. These characteristics have been the center of interest ever since Hall called attention to the usual changes which come with adolescence. He pointed out that physiologically there is an increase in the percentage of illness near the beginning of puberty, that the heart practically doubles in size during the development of puberty, which increase may be within one year or may extend over several years, and that children suffer from frequent headaches at this time; psychologically, imitation is at its highest point; children are anxious to stand well in the eyes of their playmates; boys are prone to have eating, drinking, and smoking contests, while girls "affect daintiness, become exceedingly discriminating in sweetmeats, bon-bons, summer drinks, etc."

The application of these teachings to the seventh grade was not made by Hall. It has become evident, however, that early adolescence, which coincides with entrance into the seventh grade, is a period of crucial importance and out of the studies stimulated by Hall's work has come that vigorous movement, variously named, which transforms the seventh grade from a place where mere reviews of elementary courses are carried on to a place where the enriched curriculum deserves to be classified as a part of secondary education.

Whether we call the seventh grade a part of the junior high school, or an intermediate school, or merely think of it as an enriched elementary school, it is especially fitting that a campaign for better health, which is of practical value to all, should find a prominent place in the new organization.

A. HEALTH PRINCIPLES TO BE EMPHASIZED IN THE SEVENTH GRADE

As a result of a study of some of the characteristics of children in the seventh grade, the principles recommended for special emphasis are as follows: (1) no reading in bed, (2) moderate amount of exercise and a corresponding amount of rest, (3) the value of a well-balanced diet, including such factors as the substitution of

milk for tea and coffee, a cooked cereal in the morning, fruit, and at least one vegetable in addition to potatoes every day, and the elimination of candy and other sweet foods except at the close of meals.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TEACHING HEALTH PRINCIPLES IN THE SEVENTH GRADE

The method of teaching health principles suggested for the seventh grade combines health education, literature, and grammar.

TABLE I

COURSE OF STUDY	LITERATURE															GRAMMAR				
	Field, Eugene	Dickens	Roosevelt	Byron	Scott	Wordsworth	Bryant	Milton	Shelley	Carlyle	Poe	Whittier	Lowell	Longfellow	Letter Writing	Description	Synonyms and Antonyms	Outlining	Biographies	Dictation
Allentown, Pa.		X	X								X		X	X	X	X				
Chattanooga, Tenn.		X	X	X		X	X			X		X	X	X	X	X				
Chicago, Ill.			X		X							X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Cleveland, Ohio				X	X		X				X		X	X	X	X	X			
Decatur, Ill.		X	X		X	X	X					X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Erie, Pa.		X		X								X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Harrisburg, Pa.		X	X									X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Haverhill, Mass.		X	X			X	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
Indianapolis, Ind.		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Lansing, Mich.		X	X				X					X	X	X	X			X	X	
Memphis, Tenn.														X					X	
New Orleans, La.	X	X			X				X	X	X									
Omaha, Neb.		X				X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rochester, N.Y.		X	X		X						X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spokane, Wash.		X	X		X								X	X	X	X				
St. Paul, Minn.		X					X					X	X	X						
Tacoma, Wash.					X			X	X			X	X	X	X					
State of Maine.							X		X			X		X	X	X			X	
State of Oregon.					X	X	X						X	X	X					
State of Pennsylvania.		X				X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X			

Table I has been compiled to indicate some of the subject-matter found in this grade in a number of the latest revised courses of study. An X indicates that the author named at the top of the table, or the particular phase of grammar mentioned, receives

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

(Incomplete plan)

Grammar	Literature	Health
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Study of adjectives, especially descriptive 2. Distinction between synonyms and antonyms 3. Finer discrimination in use of words, especially applicable to special situation 4. Study of description—character sketch 5. Methods of research 6. Distinction between primary and secondary sources 7. Dictation exercise 8. Use of direct quotation. Writing of conversation 9. Oral composition. Reports on topics assigned 10. Study of outlining. Outlining facts emphasized in oral reports 11. Assignment of special topics. Use of reference books, index, card catalogue, current literature 12. Letter writing. Letter of Bryant, giving his habits of life as an example 13. Imitative type of composition. Essay. Study of Addison. Members of the class "silent observers" of violation of proper health habits 14. Exposition 15. Use of auxiliary verbs, <i>can, may, might</i>, etc. 16. Extemporaneous speech 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Biography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Eugene Field b) Charles Dickens c) Theodore Roosevelt d) Lord Byron e) Sir Walter Scott f) William Wordsworth g) William Cullen Bryant h) John Milton i) Percy Shelley j) Thomas Carlyle k) Edgar Allan Poe l) John Greenleaf Whittier 2. Recognition of portraits of famous authors—unlabeled 3. Study of the types of literature written by these men <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Was type of literature affected by health? 4. Study of history of foods as furnishing subjects for authors 5. Study of subjects and title of poetry and literature as result of the authors' habits of living 6. The essay. Study of Addison, <i>The Spectator</i> 7. Autobiography <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Study of <i>David Copperfield</i> b) Life of Theodore Roosevelt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Eugene Field <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reading in bed b) Assimilation of food c) Too much pastry 2. Charles Dickens <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Frail constitution overcome by regularity of exercise b) Worry 3. Theodore Roosevelt <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Delicate health as a child improved by exercise and good habits b) Indulgence in sports c) Use of eyes; value of glasses for nearsightedness or eye defects 4. Lord Byron <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Unbalanced diet b) Irregularity of diet c) Insufficient food 5. Sir Walter Scott <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Effect of former illness overcome by regular exercise 6. William Wordsworth <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Value of living outdoors 7. William Cullen Bryant <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regularity of all kinds of health habits. Value of cereals, fruits, and vegetables in diet b) Value of bathing 8. John Milton <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Effect of reading by moonlight — bad light 9. Percy Shelley <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Insufficient clothing in cold weather 10. Thomas Carlyle <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Eyestrain 11. Edgar Allan Poe <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) General dissipation 12. John Greenleaf Whittier <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Overexercise

emphasis in the courses of study in the city named at the left of the table. The spaces which are left blank indicate that information was not obtainable. The statement was often made in the published curriculum that supplementary lists would be sent from time to time. It is very probable, therefore, that authors other than those checked are studied. However, the table gives a fair cross-section of the work as it is ordinarily found.

The outline of the course, which it is estimated will cover the work of two months, shows how the authors included in Table I can be used to emphasize health education. The method employed in following this outline may be illustrated by a number of lessons. It will be noted that in some instances assignments only are given and in other instances suggestions for the conduct of the class period.

INTRODUCTION TO BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Ask the children to bring to class any pictures of the authors which they may have at home. Where the community is such that the pupils do not have access to this type of material, it is possible to obtain the pictures at the rate of two cents each from the Perry Pictures Company, Malden, Massachusetts. The catalogue numbers of those suggested in the outline are as follows: Eugene Field, No. 61; Charles Dickens, No. 96; Theodore Roosevelt, No. 132c; Lord Byron, No. 88; Sir Walter Scott, No. 85; William Wordsworth, No. 84; William Cullen Bryant, No. 5; John Milton, No. 76; Percy Shelley, No. 89; Thomas Carlyle, No. 92; Edgar Allan Poe, No. 33; John Greenleaf Whittier, No. 25.

If the names on the pictures are removed and a number given to each picture, additional interest is aroused in the effort to recognize them.

This material may be used as follows:

Lesson period.—"How many in the class like to solve puzzles or join a guessing contest at a party. I am going to see how well you can guess, and later an opportunity will be given to discover the success of your guess. But in order that you may understand better what we are going to do, I am going to ask you to think of someone whom you know—perhaps it is someone in your family, or your neighbor, or someone in this room—someone who is never

feeling well, always complaining about a headache, or always tired and perhaps not able to be at work. Now think of all of the adjectives you can use to describe this person—adjectives that can be used to describe any person not in good health. [Ask one of the pupils to write the adjectives on the board as the different pupils volunteer, going over them to eliminate those which are not applicable.]

“Now think of someone who is just the opposite. Think of the person who is always well, never complaining about his health, always at work. What adjectives would you use to describe that person?”

“How many know what kind of adjectives we have used? You have suggested a large number of words which, although not identical, appear to be identical as far as our use here is concerned. What are such words called? Second, you have suggested a number of words which appear to be opposites. What name is applied to these words?”

Assignment.—“Find in your dictionary as many synonyms and antonyms as you can for the word ‘healthy.’ Also find any words or expressions which can be used to describe the feeling you may have after reading a poem or a story; for example, a story which makes you feel sad.”

When these lists of words are brought to class, a little time may well be spent in emphasizing the finer discriminations in the use of words, emphasis for the present being placed upon those words used to describe the appearance of a person.

Assignment.—“A book of English synonyms, antonyms, and prepositions gives the following synonyms for ‘healthy’: ‘hale, healthful, hearty, hygienic, salubrious, salutary, sound, strong, vigorous, well, and wholesome’; and the following antonyms: ‘delicate, diseased, emaciated, exhausted, failing, fainting, and fragile.’ By using the large dictionaries, find out which of these adjectives may be used to describe the appearance of a person.”

BIOGRAPHICAL STUDIES

Lesson period.—“We are now ready to see how well you can guess. Before you are a number of pictures of well-known writers.

I am going to ask you to do two things: first, select the picture of a person whom you think from his appearance did not enjoy good health and write a paragraph telling why you chose that picture; second, select the picture of a person whom you think enjoyed the best of health and tell why you have chosen that picture. You may use any of the adjectives which you have found can be used to describe such persons or you may use your dictionary to find additional words. Remember that you are only guessing and that photographs are frequently 'touched up' to eliminate certain lines." (This phase of the work has three aims: (1) to interest children in the health question, (2) to initiate a desire on the part of the pupils to read the biographies of these men, and (3) to teach them to identify the pictures of famous men.)

Assignment.—Eugene Field. (Selected as an example of poor health resulting from eating pastry, poor assimilation of food, and reading in bed.) Ask the children to read the life of Eugene Field from as many sources as possible, bringing to class quotations about his health and methods of work. In order that the work may be uniform, have the children record their references as follows: (1) name of the author, (2) name of the book and the number of the volume used if there is more than one, (3) place of publication, (4) name of publisher, (5) date of publication, (6) the page upon which the material is found, and (7) the exact quotation which refers to health or method of work. The purpose of this assignment is threefold: (1) health emphasis, (2) acquainting the children with the life of Eugene Field, and (3) use of reference material, methods of recording reading, and the use of quotation marks.

For the purpose of illustrating just what can be done with this phase of the work, a few quotations describing the life of Eugene Field are given:

He was at that time in his 33rd year. . . . If Eugene Field had ever stood up to his full height, he would have measured slightly over six feet. But he never did and was content to shamble through life appearing two inches shorter than he really was. Shamble is perhaps hardly the word to use. . . . It was simply a walk with the least possible waste of energy. It fitted Dr. Holmes' definition of walking as a forward motion to prevent falling. . . . His legs always acted as if they were weary and would like to lean their master up against something.

Field's arms were long, ending in well-shaped hands, which were remarkably deft and would have been attractive had he not at some time spoiled his fingers by the nail-biting habit. His shoulders were broad and square, and not nearly as much rounded as might have been expected from his position in writing. It was not the stoop of his shoulders that detracted from his height, but a certain settling together, if I may so say, of the couplings of his backbone. He was large-boned throughout, but without muscles that should have gone with such a frame. . . .

The photographs of Field are numerous, and some of them preserve a fair impression of his remarkable physiognomy. None of the paintings of him that I have seen do him justice. . . . The best photographs only fail because they cannot retain the peculiar deathlike pallor of the skin and the clear, innocent china blue of the eyes.¹

From 1889 Field's life was one long struggle with dyspepsia and inherited weakness which he persisted in aggravating by indulgence in those two twin enemies of health—pastry and reading in bed. During our intimate association I had exercised a wholesome restraint on his pie habit and reduced his hours of reading in bed to a minimum.²

On the eve of his departure for Europe in 1889 he wrote to a friend: "The attack of indigestion with which I am suffering began last June, resulting from irregularity in hours of eating and sleeping and from too severe application to work. The contemplated voyage will do me good I think."³

"What exceeding folly," he wrote to a friend, "was it that tempted me to cross the sea in search of what I do not seem able to find here—a righteous stomach?"⁴

Suggested questions for class discussion.—(1) What might Field's posture indicate? (2) Why should he not want to exert himself sufficiently to walk straight? (3) What is the meaning of the words, "He was large-boned throughout, but without muscles that should have gone with such a frame"? (Here is an opportunity to discuss the artistic side of health education—the attractiveness of a well-rounded body. Pictures of Greek art may be brought in for the discussion.) (4) Field's trip to Europe did not help his physical condition. Why not? (Bring out the fact that injuries to the body brought on by incorrect eating and eyestrain cannot be remedied so quickly.) (5) What does the nail-biting habit indicate?

¹ Slason Thompson, *Eugene Field, A Study in Heredity and Contradictions*, I, 220. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.

² *Ibid.*, II, 139.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

Assignment.—Divide the class into three groups. Assign to one group the topic, "What is meant by assimilation of food?" To the second group assign the topic, "Why did eating too much pastry injure the health of Eugene Field?" To the third group assign the topic, "What should Eugene Field have known about reading in bed"?

Lesson period.—Lead the children into a discussion of the misuse of the body. Discuss eyestrain, especially the strain produced upon the muscles of the eye when one is reading in an unnatural position.

Assignment.—"Imagine that you were Eugene Field's best friend and that you were visiting with him in his den, talking over old times. During the conversation he tells you that he is suffering from indigestion caused by eating too much pastry and that he has a bad habit of reading in bed. For the next lesson write the conversation which you think might take place under these conditions, including the arguments and warnings you would give. How would you try to influence him to change his habits of indulgence?"

Assignment.—Ask the children to bring in some of Field's writings. This assignment has two aims: first, to familiarize the children with his writings and, second, to see if the children can detect any difference in his earlier and later works due to the changes in his health. Bring out the point that Field had an obligation to perform to people in general. Raise the question as to his right to injure his health by incorrect living when he had a natural gift to make others happy through his writings. Do we have the same responsibility? Are we under obligation to live healthy lives not only for the personal advantage but for altruistic motives? Make a general survey of some of the habits of the children, especially those considered in the study of the life of Field.

Assignment.—"We are going to study the lives of a number of men, and we shall need different members of the class to act as specialists in the various fields of health so that we may be able to compare the different methods of work and the results of these methods." (Appoint those pupils to be specialists in a field where they need the particular phase of instruction. For example, the

child who reads constantly, straining his eyes, should be appointed to be one of the eye specialists. It may be well to appoint several eye specialists to compete with each other as in business—provided the competition is kept wholesome under the direction of the teacher—thus vying with each other in “prescribing” ways to better the health conditions of their patient—the author under discussion. This phase of the work necessitates study of the eye, and the child thus obtains much information. The eye specialists play an important part in the study of the lives of Field, Milton, and Carlyle. The children who take but little interest in proper and sufficient exercise will become athletic directors and take active part in the study of Field, Coleridge, who took insufficient exercise, Whittier, who “overexercised a naturally feeble constitution,” and Wordsworth and Bryant, who lived outdoors constantly and were very regular about their exercise. The committee on diet will find interest in Lord Byron, whose illness was brought on by improper and irregular diet, in Eugene Field, and in Bryant, whose naturally weak constitution was greatly strengthened by proper food and regularity of meals. Hold each child responsible for his part of the work. It should be his duty to assemble all of the material brought up in class so that later all of the eye specialists working in a committee can make a report to the entire class.)

The purpose of such an assignment is threefold: (1) to give to each individual an opportunity to become informed in a field where there is special need of instruction, where health would be impaired because of lack of knowledge, (2) to teach responsibility in doing one special thing; and (3) to afford experience in working in committees—co-operation in small as well as in large groups.

It is impossible to give here a detailed account of each author, but a few general statements may be made. Dickens' interest in such sports and exercises as riding, walking, battledore and shuttlecock, American game of bowls, cricket, quoits, and bagatelle will lead to a discussion of these games as forms of good exercise, which may be followed by a discussion of the American games, classified in the order of the children's favorites. *My Father as I Recall Him*,¹ by Mamie Dickens, gives a detailed discussion of

¹ New York: E. P. Dutton & Co.

Dickens' attitude toward these games. The children will be interested in writing a letter to an English boy or girl on the subject, "My Classmate as I Recall Him."

One other quotation will be given because it represents the results of regular habits. The following letter written by William Cullen Bryant explains the quotation that Bryant "when over fourscore, was hale and fresh, and possessed 'a wonderful balance of faculties in a marvelous harmonious frame.'" This letter was written in 1871 and gives interesting particulars of his uncommonly simple and sensible mode of life.

I promised some time since to give you some account of my habits of life, as far at least as regards diet, exercise, and occupation. I am not sure that it will be of any use to you, although the system which I have for many years observed seems to answer my purposes very well. I have reached a pretty advanced period of life without the usual infirmities of old age, and with my strength, activity, and bodily faculties generally in pretty good preservation. How far this may be the effect of my way of life, adopted long ago, and strictly adhered to, is perhaps uncertain.

I rise early—at this time of the year, about half-past five; in summer, half an hour, or even an hour, earlier. Immediately, with very little encumbrance of clothing, I begin a sort of exercise, for the most part designed to expand the chest, and, at the same time, call into action all the muscles and articulations of the body. These are performed with dumb-bells—the very lightest—covered with flannel, with a pole, a horizontal bar, and light chair swung around my head. After a full hour, and sometimes more, passed in this manner, I bathe from head to foot. When at my place in the country, I sometimes shorten my exercises in my chamber, and, going out, occupy myself for half an hour or more in some work which requires brisk exercise. After my bath, if breakfast is not ready, I sit down to my studies until I am called.

My breakfast is a simple one—hominy and milk, or, in place of hominy, brown bread or oatmeal, or wheaten grits, and, in season, baked sweet apples. Buckwheat cakes I do not decline, nor any article of vegetable food, but animal food I never take at breakfast. Tea and coffee I never touch at any time. Sometimes I take a cup of chocolate which has no narcotic effect, and agrees with me very well. At breakfast, I often eat fruit, either in its natural state or freshly stewed.

After breakfast I occupy myself for a while with my studies, and then, when in town, I walk down to the office of the *Evening Post*, nearly three miles distant, and, after about three hours, return, always walking, whatever be the weather or the state of the streets. In the country I am engaged in my literary tasks till a feeling of weariness drives me out into the open air; and I go to my farm or into the garden and prune the fruit trees, or perform some

other work about them which they need, and then go back to my books. I do not often drive out, preferring to walk.

In the country, I dine early; and it is only at that meal that I take either meat or fish, and of these but a moderate quantity, making my dinner mostly of vegetables. At the meal which is called tea, I only take a little bread and butter, with fruit if it be on the table. In town where I dine later, I make but two meals a day. Fruit makes a considerable part of my diet, and I eat it at almost any hour of the day without inconvenience. My drink is water; yet I sometimes, though rarely, take a glass of wine. I never meddle with tobacco, except to quarrel with its use.

That I may rise early, I, of course, go to bed early—in town, as early as ten; in the country, somewhat earlier.

For many years, I have avoided in the evening every kind of literary occupation which tasks the faculties, such as composition—even to writing of letters—for the reason that it excites the nervous systems, and prevents sound sleep. . . . I abominate all drugs and narcotics, and have carefully avoided everything which spurs nature to exertions which it would not otherwise make. Even with my food I do not take the usual condiments, such as pepper and the like.¹

Such a letter as this suggests to the children that they write a friendly letter describing their modes of living. In addition to the experience given to the class, the letters should give to the teacher much desired information without the children being aware of the purpose.

These quotations will suffice to show the possibilities in using the lives of famous men as a guide to health instruction. It can also be seen that the study of each author can be adapted to the needs of the children and at the same time closely follow the required course of study. This material makes use of the fact that, as suggested by Dr. Hall, children delight in imitation and that they are "bemastered by the style of the great authors they have read." That they may carry further their desire to imitate, each one in the group might assume a name such as "Busy Thoughts of a Busy Fellow," or "The Quiet Advisor," or "The Silent Bracer," etc., and, in the style of *The Spectator* written by Addison, record either his own health habits or the habits of other children in the room during the school day. In this way, records may be kept of all of the children, and the motive will be of an altruistic nature.

¹ Andrew James Symington, *William Cullen Bryant*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1880. Pp. 228-30.